

Sweepstakes PROMOTIONS

Protect yourself from rip-offs

You open your mailbox to find an announcement that says you may have already won a fantastic prize - all you have to do is purchase a magazine subscription or some other type of merchandise. Sweepstakes like these are not necessarily illegal, but they are commonly used by disreputable promoters to swindle unsuspecting consumers.

HELPFUL TIPS

- **Never pay to enter a sweepstakes.** Legitimate sweepstakes promoters do not require you to pay or buy something in order to enter.
- **Realize that buying a product will not improve your chances of winning.**
- **Read the fine print.** If you think the large print says you've won, the fine print probably tells you that you haven't. If you're guaranteed to win a cash award or other prize, it's also guaranteed that there are strings attached.
- **If the solicitation arrives by bulk mail, you probably haven't won a big prize.** Bulk mailings only guarantee that thousands of people are receiving the same mail piece you received.
- **If the solicitation resembles a government document or is "urgent," throw it away.** The government is not in the direct mail sweepstakes business, and "urgent" mailings are designed to make you think they are more important than they really are.
- **Avoid foreign lottery mailings.** Unless you previously purchased a foreign lottery ticket, there is no reason to believe you may win, have won, or should pool your money with others to win a foreign lottery.
- **Entering sweepstakes in a public place guarantees you will receive more sweepstakes solicitations in the mail.** The personal information you provide on entry forms in malls, places of business, flea markets, etc. is often sold to third parties for placement on sweepstakes mailing lists.
- **Remember if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.**

RESOURCES

The Consumer Protection Division of the Indiana Attorney General's Office works to safeguard the rights of Indiana citizens every day. If you have questions or complaints regarding sweepstakes promotions, or other appropriate consumer issues, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division using the address and phone number listed below, or visit www.in.gov/attorneygeneral for more information.